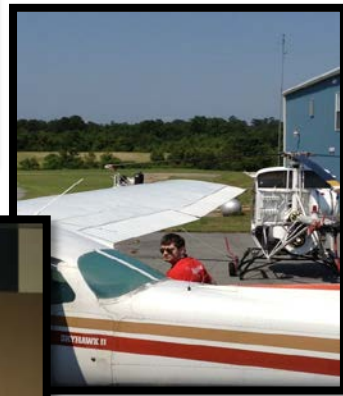


Guide to Supported Employment



**Supported
Employment**

**It is for
YOU!!**



DBHDD

Developed by the Statewide Quality Improvement Council in collaboration with the
Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities

Guide to Supported Employment

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1. Introduction

Work Matters

Generally, people of working age who are employed are happier, healthier and have more friends than people who are not working. This is true for people with and without disabilities. Supported Employment is one of the ways to help people with intellectual and developmental disabilities find a job and keep a job.

Most people with I/DD want to work when given the choice

People in Georgia Want to Work

In Georgia, as well as across the country, people with disabilities are speaking up because they want to work. Some people want full time work, some want part time, others want a better job or a better place to work. In Georgia, nearly half of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities receiving services without a job indicate they want to work in the community (47 percent). However, only 15 percent of people receiving services have integrated employment as a goal in their service plan. Some people who are working indicate they want to work somewhere else (24 percent). [National Core Indicators Georgia 2010-11 data] However, often people are not aware of the choices or what is possible. Nationally, when given a real choice, nearly everyone say they want a job, but only 22-28% of people with I/DD are working in paid integrated community jobs. [ICI, Butterworth study]

Why We Created the Guide to Supported Employment

This Guide to Supported Employment was prepared by the Georgia Division of Developmental Disabilities Statewide Quality Improvement Council. It is intended to:

- Explain why employment is important,
- Illustrate through real life examples the difference work makes in people's lives,
- Answer common questions about pay and health benefits when you work and have an intellectual and/or developmental disability, and
- Provide information and resources on Supported Employment programs in Georgia.

2. Benefits to Employment

There are many benefits to employment: health, social, and economical. As stated, people with disabilities want to work but unfortunately are not offered the choice. An individual's health is better when they work. People who work have a reason to their life and it creates order as well. There is an economical bonus to the individual who works and potentially to the employer. The worker becomes a tax payer contributing to society. A person who works has more an increased social

Benefits to having a job: health, social and economical.

network and more friends. Preliminary data shows that individuals receiving Supported Employment have better outcomes in their lives (Delmarva 2012).

The sections below describe different resources and ways employment supports and services can be received. There are services which can be accessed through the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) and through other government agencies, like Social Security and Vocational Rehabilitation. There are different options and resources out there for people to take advantage of and the following remaining sections describe each one of those options. People who need some supports and services to help get or maintain a job should be aware of what is available for them so they can choose which will best fit their needs.

Matt's Story

Though Matt has an intellectual disability, a hearing and a visual impairment, it does not slow him down as a Credit Support Specialist in the Credit Operations Department of SunTrust bank. You see, Matt absolutely LOVES to scan documents. Matt never smiles as big as when he has a large stack of records to be imaged.



As a Credit Support Specialist, Matt is responsible for making sure documents are imaged in the database to be viewed online by Portfolio Managers and Senior Credit Officers. He is also a team player by making sure documents received from Credit Analysts are prepared for filing and identified with a shelf number and date stamped. Matt also participates in special projects, such as organizing credit files and creating an inventory list to send to the Retention Department.

Through partnership with SunTrust, it was identified that there was a need for scanning documents, and Matt was hired for that role as a temporary through a staffing service on April 2004. He withstood many layoffs at the bank and eventually became a SunTrust temporary employee. Finally, he has the status of permanent part-time employee of the bank, and is thrilled with his position. His employer stated, "Matt exemplifies a teammate who truly loves his job, and is dedicated to providing excellent support to his

teammates. He is diligent, accommodating, and observant when it comes to his work at SunTrust.”

3. Overview of DBHDD and Home and Community Based Services

Who is the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD)?

DBHDD provides treatment and support services to people with mental illnesses and addictive diseases, and support to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. DBHDD serves people of all ages with the most severe and likely to be long-term conditions, including consumers with forensic issues.

Services are provided across the state through contracts with 25 community service boards, boards of health and various private providers, and through state-operated regional hospitals.

DBHDD provides and funds a variety of community-based services, including:

- Treatment through providers such as with Community Service Boards;
- Mobile Crisis services for adults as well as children and adolescents;
- Services funded through Medicaid waivers for people with developmental & intellectual disabilities;
- Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) teams that can visit those with persistent mental illness on a daily basis if needed;
- Group homes;
- Crisis Stabilization Programs;
- And many others for all three of the major populations we serve.

Vision

Every person who participates in our services leads a satisfying, independent life with dignity and respect.

Mission

Provide and promote local accessibility and choice of services and programs for individuals, families and communities through partnerships, in order to create a sustainable, self-sufficient and resilient life in the community.

What is a Medicaid waiver?

The Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) waiver program is authorized in §1915(c) Social Security Act. The program allows the State of Georgia (through its qualified providers) to deliver an array of home and community-based services. The services provided make it easier for Medicaid beneficiaries to live in their community. The State has broad discretion to design its waiver program to address the

needs of the waiver’s target population. Waiver benefits complement and/or supplement the services available to participants through the Medicaid State plan and other federal, state and local public programs. The wavier also benefits the supports that families and communities provide.

What are the NOW/COMP waivers?

The Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) administers a Medicaid Home and Community Based (HCBS) waiver program called NOW and COMP Waivers.

The NOW Waiver (New Options Waiver) provides supports to people with developmental disabilities who live in their own home or with family members and require services costing less than \$25,000 a year.

The COMP Waiver (Comprehensive Supports Waiver) provides supports to people who need a full range of intensive in-home or out-of-home services with costs of over \$25,000 a year.

Some of the services under the NOW/COMP waivers include:

Community Access	Community Living Support
Community Residential Alternative	Respite
Environmental Accessibility Adaptations	Supported Employment
Specialized Medical Supplies & Equipment	

4. Qualifying for DBHDD Services is the First Step

Qualifying for NOW/COMP Services:

People have to be Medicaid eligible to obtain a NOW/COMP Waiver. If you receive SSI, you automatically have Medicaid. If you receive Medicare and not Medicaid, it is possible to become Medicaid eligible through a “Medical Assistance Only (MAO)” process. The Intake and Evaluation Team at the DBHDD Regional Office can help begin this process.

The target group for the NOW/COMP waiver program is individuals who have intellectual disabilities and/or developmental disabilities. Individuals with developmental disabilities such as cerebral palsy, epilepsy, autism, or neurological impairments must have severe impairments to be eligible for NOW/COMP waiver services. Both children and adults can be served.

There are many people in Georgia who need services and the waiting list is long. Families and individuals should not wait until they need the services to apply. Think ahead and apply now. This is especially true for students graduating from high school.

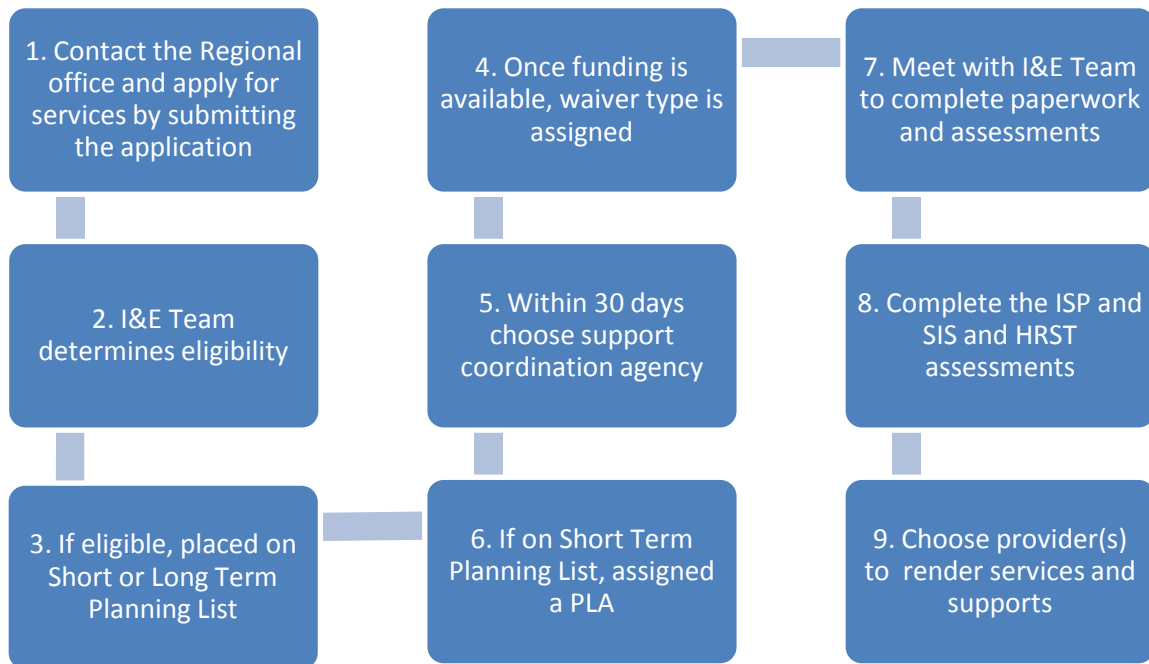
Receiving NOW/COMP waiver services and utilizing the Supported Employment services can assist a young adult to be employed after high school.

If a person is not already enrolled in NOW/COMP services but would like to access Supported Employment through a Medicaid Waiver, the person needs to apply for a waiver. The NOW/COMP waivers are administered by the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities. The six regional offices are responsible for the following:

- Intake and evaluation,
- Preauthorization of services,
- Utilization management,
- Crisis resolution, and
- Quality management.

Individuals access the NOW/COMP waivers through the regional offices. (See page 6 for regional office information.)

How to apply for NOW/COMP:



The steps to access any waiver services including Supported Employment are:

1. Contact the Intake and Evaluation Team (“I&E Team”) at the Regional Office to apply for services.
2. The individual and family submit an application to the Regional I&E Team. Attaching a psychological evaluation along with the application can help speed the process. The person must also show proof of citizenship (birth certificate, passport, or permanent resident card.)

3. The I&E Team will evaluate the application to determine if the person is eligible for services.
4. If eligible, they will place the person on either a Long Term or a Short Term Planning List

SHORT TERM PLANNING LIST	LONG TERM PLANNING LIST
The short term planning list is designed for people needing waiver services immediately or in the near future.	The long term planning list is designed for people needing waiver services at some point in the future.

If the person is on the short term planning list, then a planning list administrator (“PLA”) will be assigned. The PLA will check in with the person and his/her family periodically to see if there are any changes in the person’s situation. They will also help the person look for other supports.

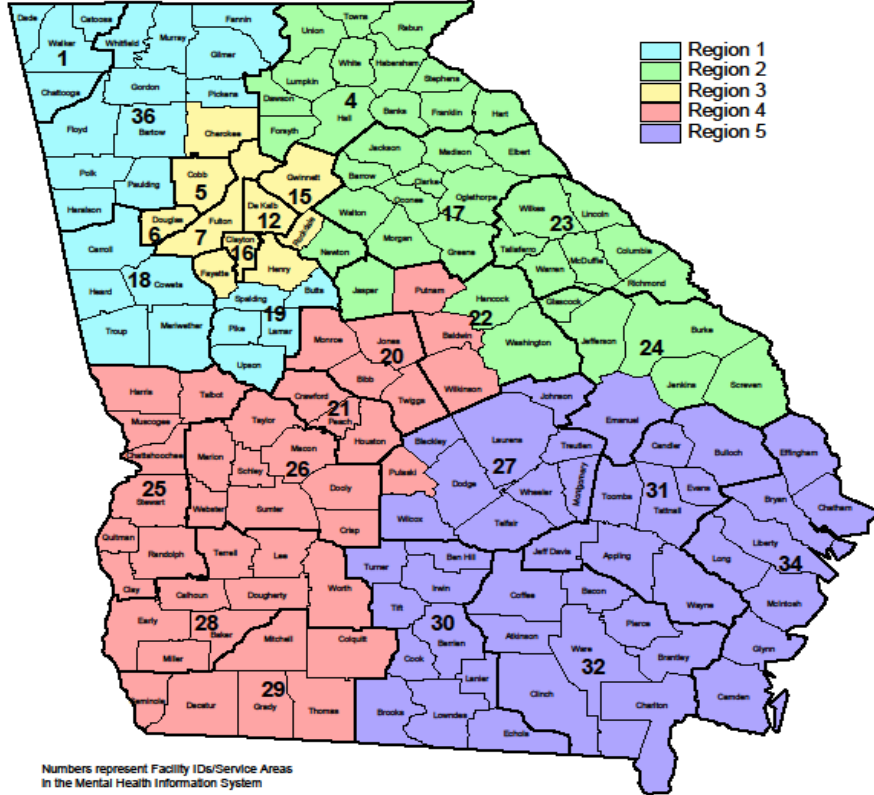
5. When funding becomes available, the Regional Office staff will send a letter stating the person has been approved for a Medicaid Waiver.
6. The person will have 30 days to choose which support coordination agency he/she wants to work with. If the person does not make a selection, one will be assigned.
7. The I&E team will meet with the person to complete the paperwork for the waiver. This includes completing the following:
 - a. a social history,
 - b. a psychological update,
 - c. a nursing assessment, and
 - d. other Medicaid required documents.

The person wants to ensure the assessments thoroughly describe what assistance is needed.

8. The PLA will assist in completing an Individual Support Plan (“ISP”). Goals will be developed from needs identified in the intake assessments.
9. The PLA will also complete the Supports Intensity Scale (SIS) and the Health Risk Assessment Tool (HRST) which will be used in determining the amount of funding that the person can use for services.
10. After figuring out the Individual Support Plan and learning the funding amount available to the person, the PLA will give the person and his/her family information about provider agencies licensed to provide assistance. The PLA will know all the providers who specifically provide Supported Employment services. Some providers have information about the assistance they provide posted to a website managed by DBHDD. Families and individuals can also search this website to find a provider in their area: www.georgiaddproviders.org.

Find and Contact Your Regional Office

Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, & Addictive Diseases
 MHDDAD Regions (colors)
 Overlaid with
 Service Areas & Community Service Boards (borders)



Numbers represent Facility IDs/Service Areas
 in the Mental Health Information System

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| 1 - Lookout Mountain Community Services | 18 - Pathways Center for Behavioral & Developmental Growth | 27 - Community Service Board of Middle Georgia |
| 4 - Georgia Mountains Community Services | 19 - McIntosh Trail Community Service Board | 28 - Albany Area Community Service Board |
| 5 - Cobb Community Service Board | 20 - River Edge Behavioral Health Center | 29 - Georgia Pines Community MH/MRSA Services |
| 6 - Douglas Community Service Board | 21 - Phoenix Center Behavioral Health Services | 30 - Behavioral Health Services of South Georgia |
| 7 - Fulton County DMH/DDAD | 22 - Oconee Community Service Board | 31 - Pineland Area Community Service Board |
| 12 - DeKalb Community Service Board | 23 - Community Service Board of East Central Georgia | 32 - Satilla Community Service Board |
| 15 - GRN Community Service Board | 24 - Ogeechee Behavioral Health Services | 34 - Gateway Community Service Board |
| 16 - Clayton Community Service Board | 25 - New Horizons Community Service Board | 36 - Highland Rivers Community Service Board |
| 17 - Advantage Behavioral Health Systems | 26 - Middle Flint Behavioral Healthcare | * - Haralson Behavioral Health Services is operated by Haralson County Board of Health |

DMHDDAD, Decision Support Section (April 1, 2005)

Effective July 1, 2005

REGION 1	
Contact Information	Counties
705 North Division Street Building 104 Rome, GA 30165 Phone: 706-802-5275 Toll free: 1-800-646-7721	Banks, Bartow, Catoosa, Chattooga, Cherokee, Cobb, Dade, Dawson, Douglas, Fanin, Floyd, Forsyth, Franklin, Gilmer, Gordon, Habersham, Hall, Haralson, Hart, Lumpkin, Murray, Paulding, Pickens, Polk, Rabun, Stephens, Towns, Union, Walker, White,

	and Whitfield
REGION 2	
Contact Information	Counties
3405 Mike Padgett Highway Building 3 Augusta, GA 30906 Phone: 706-792-7733 Toll Free: 1-866-380-4835	Baldwin, Barrow, Bibb, Burke, Clarke, Columbia, Elbert, Emanuel, Glascock, Greene, Hancock, Jackson, Jasper, Jefferson, Jenkins, Jones, Lincoln, Madison, McDuffie, Monroe, Morgan, Oconee, Oglethorpe, Putnam, Richmond, Screven, Taliaferro, Twiggs, Walton, Warren, Washington, Wilkes, and Wilkinson
REGION 3	
Contact Information	Counties
100 Crescent Centre Parkway Suite 900 Tucker, GA 30084 Phone: 770-414-3052	Clayton, Dekalb, Fulton, Gwinnett, Newton and Rockdale
REGION 4	
Contact Information	Counties
P.O. Box 1378/400 S. Pinetree Boulevard Thomasville, GA 31299/3792 Phone: 229-225-5099 Toll Free: 1-877-683-8557	Baker, Ben Hill, Berrien, Brooks, Calhoun, Colquitt, Cook, Decatur, Dougherty, Early, Echols, Grady, Irwin, Lanier, Lee, Lowndes, Miller, Mitchell, Seminole, Terrell, Thomas, Tift, Turner, and Worth
REGION 5	
Contact Information	Counties
1915 Eisenhower Drive Building 2 Savannah, GA 31406 Phone: 912-303-1670 Toll Free: 1-800-348-3503	Appling, Atkinson, Bacon, Bleckley, Brantley, Bryan, Bulloch, Camden, Candler, Charlton, Chatham, Clinch, Coffee, Dodge, Effingham, Evans, Glynn, Jeff Davis, Johnson, Laurens, Liberty, Long, McIntosh, Montgomery, Pierce, Pulaski, Tattnall, Telfair, Toombs, Treutlen, Ware, Wayne, Wheeler and Wilcox

REGION 6	
Contact Information	Counties
P.O. Box 12435/3000 Schatulga Road Building 4 Columbus, GA 31907 Phone: 706-565-7835	Butts, Carroll, Chattahoochee, Clay, Coweta, Crawford, Crisp, Dooly, Fayette, Harris, Heard, Henry, Houston, Lamar, Macon, Marion, Meriwether, Muscogee, Peach, Pike, Quitman, Randolph, Schley, Spalding, Stewart, Sumter, Talbot, Taylor, Troup, Upson and Webster

5. What is Supported Employment and How Does it Work?

What is Supported Employment?

Supported Employment assists a person to obtain competitive work performed in an integrated work setting. Individuals are matched to jobs consistent with their strengths, resources, abilities, capabilities, and interests.

Job Matching = A job that meets the needs of the person and the employer



Individualized supports are provided to the person to learn and keep his/her job.

What is Supported Employment within the NOW/COMP Waivers?

This service supports people to become employed and to maintain their employment in the community at or above minimum wage. It can include:

- Discovering Interests
- Job Development
- Job Coaching
- Long Term Supports
- Career Development

If a person has NOW/COMP waiver services already, he/she can speak with the Support Coordinator about accessing Supported Employment under the waiver. The person can choose a Supported Employment waiver provider to explore job opportunities. The waiver funding under NOW/COMP provides supports to the person to seek employment in the community.

People currently using waiver services for Pre-Vocational services can instead use Supported Employment services. The same waiver that funds services in a day program or sheltered workshop can support a person to work at or above minimum wage.

Matt's Story



Matt P. teamed up with a supported employment provider to seek a career that Matt thought he wanted. He desired to work at his Alma Mater. This job was in the lunchroom and after one day Matt and his career specialist knew this was not the job for him. Matt did complete the two- week trial period that he had been asked to do with the school.

Upon working with Matt the career specialist knew Matt liked being dressed neatly and not getting his hands dirty, so a job was sought out in the banking industry and carved for Matt at a local bank. Matt is able to wear his dress shirts, tie, have his own desk, name tag and business cards. Some of his duties are greeting the customers, shred, mail carrier, keeping copiers and fax machines filled with paper.

Matt has truly become a team player after four years. He has attended company trips, participated in parades, lunches with co-workers and a member of the local Optimist Club. Matt continues to learn new tasks when the need arises. Thru the relationships at the bank a group of guys meet twice a month for Guys Night Out at different homes. The local bank was bought over by Certus and they continue to support Matt on the job site and he just received his second raise. Matt said the day he got the job: "My dad has a banker for a son."

Adding Supported Employment Services

Individuals who participate in the New Options Waiver (NOW) or Comprehensive Waiver (COMP) can select supported employment services at anytime. The process is simple and easy.

1. The person will meet with his/her support coordinator to discuss the details of supported employment services.
2. The person will request supported employment services be added to the Individual Support Plan (ISP), including the appropriate funding.
3. The person will choose a supported employment provider in his/her area or may choose to self- direct the service (please see participant-directed services in the waiver manuals).
4. Supported employment services are person-centered and customized for every individual.

6. School Transition

Successful transitioning from school to adult life for individuals with disabilities is possible with the thoughtful planning of the Individual Education Program (IEP) Team. Students with disabilities and their families are an integral part of that team. Other potential members could be a Vocational Rehabilitation specialist, Supported Employment providers and a representative from your DBHDD Regional Office. The IEP Team should have a vision of employment for the student, that is comparable to students of the same age who do not experience a disability.

Setting goals that lead to successful outcomes in the area of employment is a key factor. Goals that lead to independence, self-advocacy and discovering interests can be important in successful transition to employment and adult life.

What is Transition Planning?

Transition planning includes preparing a student for life after high school. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA 04) specifies that students' IEPs address transition services that students may need in order to move from school to post-school opportunities. In Georgia, students with their IEP team members formally begin planning for their transition before 9th grade or at the age of 16, whichever comes first. However, it is never too early to start planning. The team should create realistic goals, specific timelines and clear responsibilities for all members of the team.

Who Participates in Transition Planning?

The student is the most important member of the IEP team. Other members could include:

- Family members including parent or guardian
- The school principal or designee
- The student's teachers
- Career/Vocational teachers
- Other school staff, such as guidance counselor, psychologist
- Adult service agency representatives:
 - Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist
 - Supported Employment Provider
 - A representative from the DBHDD Regional Office

The student is the most important member of the IEP team

What is the Transition Plan?

The Transition Plan is part of the student's IEP and may include the following:

- Post Secondary Goals after graduation in the areas of Education and Training; Employment and Daily Living
- Interests, strengths, and career goal (Transition Assessment)
- Yearly Transition IEP Goals to enable the student to reach their Post Secondary Outcome Goals
- Activities to help reach these Transition IEP goals
- School and post-school services that can help reach their goals
- Notice of rights a year before reaching age 18 (Age of Majority)

How Can Students' Prepare for their Transition?

- Attend and speak up at their IEP meetings
- Share their dreams and goals
- Understand and be able to share their strengths and weaknesses
- Work to achieve their goals by using the resources available.

Available Resources:

The Georgia Department of Education, Special Education Services and Supports has a Transition Tool Box that includes a transition manual. This resource can be accessed by going onto the GaDOE website – www.doe.k12.ga.us (in search box type “transition manual”).

This manual contains information such as:

- Transition Timelines
- Post School Employment Options
- Transition Planning (includes a checklist)
- Family Resources
- Appendix

Georgia’s Parent Training Institute is Parent to Parent of Georgia. www.p2pga.org Parent to Parent’s Roadmap to Success is an interactive map that navigates through key topics stops on your journey through life such as Education, Early Childhood, Parent & Family Support and Transitions to name a few. Each stop on this map will provide you with useful information.

Chris’s Story

Chris C. is a very social young man with Down Syndrome who graduated in 2007 from Roswell’s Centennial High School. Through high school Chris stayed active with his peers by participating in Fellowship of Christian Athletes Club, the Homecoming Court and other typical high school offerings. Because of these opportunities, Christopher developed many of the same goals as his peers, including wanting to go onto college and then work.

During his annual IEP, Chris’ transition plan included goals that would lead to working upon transitioning from high school. We asked that the supported employment provider attend his transition meeting to be introduced to Chris’ interests and strengths. Additionally as part of his transition plan, we applied for a Medicaid waiver and were put on the waiting list.

Upon returning home from his college experience, we began making decisions on next steps. As a single mom, my concern for Chris was developing a plan that would have him engaged while I was working. Instead of supported employment, we opted for a day support program that had piece work. Although Chris was safe, he was not happy! After a few months, we changed to a supported employment provider. After much searching, Chris got his first job with Lowes! The job coach helped to make the necessary

accommodations and supports for a successful experience. The pride he showed when he received his first pay check was priceless!

7. Supported Employment- Myths/Facts

Employment helps people to build their self-esteem and pride, helps them become a more integrated part of the community, helps people become more self-sufficient and it helps the economy.

MYTH	FACT
If someone with disabilities goes to work, he/she will lose his/her SSI check.	Until a person earns an annual income of \$28,347.00, they will keep their Medicaid health insurance. Their SSI check will be reduced based upon the amount of earnings from working. Every \$3 a person earns will reduce his/her check by \$1. (U.S. Social Security Work Incentives Planning and Assistance website, http://www.ssa.gov/work/WIPA.html#a0=-1)
If I work will I lose my medical benefits? It can feel devastating to be willing and ready to work but have to choose between work and medical care.	The truth is, that an individual with a disability can begin – and continue – working and still maintain their benefits. States can extend Medicaid to people who are working but who are earning too much money to qualify for Medicaid under the current rules.
If a worker's SSA checks stop while working then they will have to reapply for benefits all over again. It will take forever to be approved for benefits. As a result, they should not try to work.	They will not need to reapply if benefits ended within the past five years due to earnings. There's a work incentive called Expedited Reinstatement. It is possible to receive up to six months of temporary cash benefits in addition to Medicare or Medicaid coverage while SSA reviews the person's records.
Employees with disabilities are more likely to have accidents on the job than employees without disabilities.	Safety records from DuPont study "Equal to the Task," (Second Du Pont Survey, 1981) shows, both groups were identical.
There is a considerable expense to employers to accommodate workers with	Employees with disabilities do <u>not</u> have a higher absentee rate than employees without disabilities. Studies completed by

disabilities.	DuPont show employees with disabilities are not absent any more than employees without disabilities.
Hiring employees with disabilities increases workers compensation insurance rates.	Insurance rates are based on the relative hazards of the business accident experience, not on whether workers have disabilities.

Most workers with disabilities require no special accommodations and cost for those who do is minimal or much lower than many employers believe. Studies show that 15% cost nothing, 51% cost between \$1-\$500, 12% cost \$501-\$1000, and 22% cost more than \$1000.

8. Customized Employment

Customized Employment is a supported employment strategy that provides people with disabilities, and other applicants with significant barriers to employment, with an alternative to traditional, competitive jobs. According to a new definition used by the US Department of Labor, Customized Employment refers to:

Individualizing the employment relationship between employees and employers in ways that meet the needs of both. It is based on an individualized determination of the strengths, needs, and interests of the person with a disability, and is also designed to meet the specific needs of the employer. (Federal Register, June 26, 2002, Vol. 67. No. 123 pp 43154 -43149)

Customized Employment relies on a negotiated rather than competitive approach to employers. Job developers assist people to develop proposals for employers that meet the unmet needs of the employer and play to the strengths of the individual job seeker.

This approach to employment offers the promise of welcoming all persons with disabilities who wish to work into the workforce and into a job that fits their needs and interests. It also defines the critical role of vocational rehabilitation services to support both the individual with a disability and the workforce to make employment a viable option for persons once thought to be unemployable.

Discovery

The discovery strategy uses discovery as a substitute to comparison-based testing procedures in that it utilizes already-existing information rather than information developed through formal assessment methods. The discovery process is used as a guide for customizing an employment relationship for an applicant with an employer.

This process takes into account the applicant's entire life experiences rather than single instances of performance. Discovery is a two step process:

- Step one begins with a provider representative who meets with the applicant and family at the home of the applicant. These visits, along with other discovery activities, give the individual and family, as appropriate, information about their powerful roles in the process and allow the provider to compile basic information that is necessary to begin the process.
- The provider then schedules time to spend with the applicant during the activities that comprise the majority of typical days, as well as accompanying the applicant during planned community activities. This interaction allows the provider to get to know the applicant and to assist in identifying personalized preferences and conditions for employment as well as individual contributions to be offered to employers.



Narrative or Visual Profile Document: Capturing the information of discovery

This process uses a comprehensive format that describes the individual in a narrative manner, and a plan is then developed. For students, this document becomes a work in progress during the transition years of the student's school career passed on from teacher to teacher until graduation.

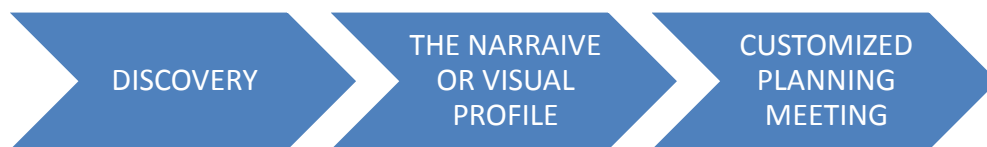
The document is then passed on to adult employment service personnel to be used as a basis for job development and support, as appropriate. For adults, the descriptive document provides information vital to planning and can substitute for traditional, comparative vocational assessment procedures. In addition to sample profile formats for a written narrative alternative format for capturing discovered information will be offered.



Customized Planning Meeting: Developing the employment plan

A Customized Planning Meeting is held with the applicant, family, friends, advocates, the provider, VR counselors and others chosen by the applicant. This planning meeting adheres to the values associated with the best of person- directed, person-centered values. The applicant (with support from family or others, as necessary) holds "trumps" during the meeting and decides the information that will be included in the plan. The meeting describes a customized job development plan in the form of a blueprint that includes:

- Generally speaking, "what works and what doesn't work" for the applicant;
- The applicant's preferences, contributions, and conditions for employment;
- The types of job tasks the applicant feels should comprise the job;
- Specific employment sites where work could be developed for the applicant; and
- Employment leads and relationships with possible employers.



Development of a Representational Portfolio

The customized process also utilizes a "presentation portfolio" as a tool for job developers to use to introduce both the general idea of persons with significant disabilities making contributions to employers and as a personalized, visual- resume that represents the best of the applicant with a disability.

The portfolio is a customized visual presentation on behalf of a person that will assist either the job developer or the person herself or himself, as he/she speaks with employers. The portfolio was test marketed with employers throughout the country and found to be of significant benefit in explaining the unique contributions of applicants. This new product can be used by people with severe and multiple disabilities, including physical and communication disabilities, and their representatives, as appropriate, in order to assist such individuals in securing employment.

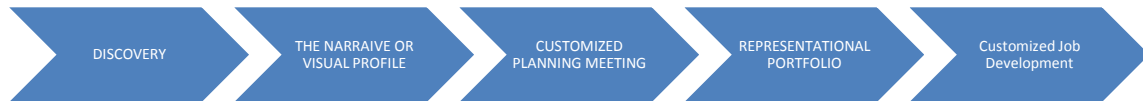


Customized Job Development

While the Customized Planning Meeting clarifies the applicant's preferences and conditions of employment and specific employment leads, it does not provide the applicant a job. Job finding efforts are initiated based on the "blueprint" developed during the Customized Planning Meeting. It is essential to discover any of the applicant's relationships or his or her support circle's relationships with targeted employers. This helps to make initial contacts with prospective employers. In most cases, conventional job descriptions will not be appropriate for an applicant with significant disabilities.

There, the provider must look beyond job openings, to identifying the unmet needs of an employer. Armed with the knowledge about the applicant, the provider can then look for job tasks and work cultures that fulfill the applicant's criteria for a successful job match. Tours of specific employment sites are used to identify the unmet needs of an employer by looking at job tasks, employee routines, and worksite cultures.

For more information on customized employment, please visit their website at www.EmploymentFirstGeorgia.org.¹



9. Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)

VR Services for People with Disabilities

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is an eligibility program, not an entitlement program. An individual who receives social security benefits is presumed eligible. VR services are provided in the state of Georgia if the following are present:

- The individual has a permanent physical or mental impairment which interferes with the ability to work
- Vocational Rehabilitation services are necessary for the individual to prepare for, enter, engage in or keep employment
- The individual with a disability can, will and wants to go to work
- The individual is available to participate.

Services received are arranged for and provided based on individual needs.

VR provides a wide range of services to help individuals with disabilities prepare for meaningful work. The services received are arranged for and provided based on

¹ This information was taken from a pamphlet developed by Employment First of Georgia, titled "Customized Employment"

individual needs, so the length of time it takes to prepare for employment is different for each person, as are the services provided.

From application to eligibility determination through assessment, and from work plan development to job placement, VR clients benefit from the expertise of the service delivery team members located in each local office. The team -- vocational rehabilitation counselor, account representative, work preparation technician, assistive work technology staff, program assistant, and employment manager -- works on the local level, utilizing comprehensive knowledge of both the employment community and the services available to the job seeker.

VR provides services necessary for a qualified client to meet the mutually agreed upon and individualized work goal. Services may include, but are not limited to:

- Counseling and Guidance
- Work Readiness Training
- Work Adjustment Training
- Postsecondary Support
- On-the-Job Training
- Vocational and Technical Training
- Supported Employment
- School to Work Transition
- Job Coaching
- Deaf, Blind and Deaf/Blind Services
- Assistive Work Technology
- Referral to Other Agencies As Needed

VR is used for initial assessment, job development and short-term supports. NOW/COMP waiver Supported Employment services are used for longer term and/or ongoing supports.



Client Assistance Program (CAP)

CAP provides assistance in informing and advising you of all available benefits under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended requires the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program to submit a State Plan that describes how Georgia will administer VR services to assist individuals with disabilities achieve independence through employment. This plan includes goals, objectives and priorities; policies and strategies to achieve those goals; and an annual evaluation of progress.

For more information please refer to this site: <http://www.vocrehabga.org/>

10. Ticket to Work

Ticket to Work is a free, voluntary program offering eligible Social Security beneficiaries options of services for employment. The purpose is to help people with disabilities receive services necessary to find, obtain and retain employment. Once a person is determined eligible, he/she receives a ticket to begin services through an Employment Network (EN). An EN is an entity under contract with Social Security to provide free services to beneficiaries under the Ticket program.

An Employment Network (EN) provides free services to help a person find a job. If the person and an EN agree to work together, you and the EN develop a plan that defines employment goals and describes the specialized services they will provide to help meet the goals. All ENs can provide the following services:

- Career Counseling
- Job Placement
- Ongoing Support Services

A person can also choose to work with the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agency if they agree to assist in this area. They can work with a person to develop a plan and help him/her in obtaining a job. If a person needs ongoing services after the VR agency closes the case, a person can work with an EN.

The person can also contact a Community Work Incentives Coordinator (CWIC) who can provide counseling about Ticket to Work, and Work Incentives, make referrals to other resources, and generally help a person to make informed decisions about getting a job.

To be eligible for the program people must be ages 18 through 64 and receive Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and/or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments

To get started, call the Ticket to Work Help Line and take the first step to a better life through work. Call now 1-866-968-7842 or 1-866-833-2967 (TDD/TTY), M - F 8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. EST.

Referring websites to obtain more information:

<http://www.ssa.gov/work/>

<http://www.chooseworkttw.net/>

11. Other Resources for Supported Employment

Natural Supports

Natural Supports helps to make the family, friends, neighbors and the community stronger, where you live and work.

Natural Supports can help you by, training you to:

- Learn how to take care of your health and your money
- Learn how to take care of your own personal needs
- Talk with others
- Get involved in community activities

Christopher's Story



From the first day Christopher was met by his supported employment job coach, it was clear he had a passion for aircrafts and possessed much knowledge concerning planes. With that interest, a part-time job was carved out for him at a flight-training company, Skyline, located adjacent to the Columbus Airport. Christopher performs a variety of tasks including washing planes for the pilots and upkeep of the grounds and office. He likes to hang out with the pilots. The entire Skyline staff has developed into natural supports. Recently, the business expanded to train pilots for helicopters and Christopher has been able to clean the helicopter a few times as well.

He also works from time to time on the training room computer and is studying the flight manuals when time permits. On a couple of occasions, the pilots have taken him up for

short flights over Columbus.

We hope the information provided in this guide was meaningful and helpful. We welcome your feedback and can send information to the following email address: supportedemployment@dhr.state.ga.us

For questions or further information, the following are resources to contact depending on the information needed:

[Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities \(DBHDD\)](#)

[Support Coordination Agency](#)

[DBHDD Regional Offices](#)

[Vocational Rehabilitation \(VR\)](#)

[Ticket to Work](#)